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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000175

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER MARR MASS PK
SUBJECT: FATA CLEARING OPERATIONS CONTINUE, DISPLACED RECEIVING ASSISTANCE, AMPLE FOOD

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 2591
1B. ISLAMABAD 2607
1C. ISLAMABAD 2672
1D. ISLAMABAD 2708
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1F. ISLAMABAD 2801
1G. ISLAMABAD 2837
1H. ISLAMABAD 2972

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (S/NF) Summary: The Pakistani military is continuing its counterinsurgency efforts along the main corridors of South Waziristan and the northern and central FATA with low level search and clear operations. Frontier Corps operations in Bajaur remain on hold, awaiting additional forces. Meanwhile, humanitarian assistance (food and non-food items) is reaching both the approximately 12,000 families displaced from Orakzai and the approximately 38,000 families displaced from South Waziristan. Of the displaced, only a few, perhaps one hundred families, are in a camp. End Summary.

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: CLEARING OPERATIONS CONTINUE

12. (S/NF) In South Waziristan, units assigned to the 11th Corps continue to conduct small-scale clearing operations on major and secondary line of communication (LOCs) and in built-up areas. Units of the 7th Division hold Makin and Razmak on the northern axis; the 9th Division holds the southwest axis from Wana while the 14th Division continues to secure the LOC to Jandola in the south east. All division continue to conduct search and clear operations. We do not expect any major new operations in South Waziristan for the moment. There has been talk of an additional push, but Pakistani military contacts have indicated to us that troop rotations and resupply requirements mean any additional effort would not happen before March.

BAJAUR: WAITING FOR A MAJOR OFFENSIVE

13. (S/NF) In Bajaur Agency, Pakistan Army troops remain deployed along the Charmung and Watalai Valley, with additional checkpoints in place near Khar to screen vehicles entering and leaving the Watalai Valley -- an indication of possible preparations for a future operation. U.S. provided Intelligence targets of interest in Bajaur Agency's Mamund Valley and provide coordinates for artillery strikes and

future Pakistan Air Force air strikes. It is likely these operations will continue through the end of January.

¶4. (S/NF) Pakistan Military and Frontier Corps forces appear to be delaying the start of a planned three-week offensive in the Mamund Valley, originally scheduled to start on January 6, because of a request for two additional Army battalions for clearing operations. The additional forces are the 14th Punjab Battalion (from Kwazakhela, Swat, the 12th Northern Light Infantry Battalion (from Sialkot, Punjab) and the 4th Commando Battalion and Karrar Company of the Special Services Group battalion (the Pakistan Army's Special Forces). In addition, the 2nd Wing of the Tocho Scouts (currently in Bajaur) may be relieved by a wing of the Chitral Scouts, who just completed FCTC training at Warsak.

INCREASED CHECKPOINTS

¶5. (S/NF) Access to Orakzai Agency from the surrounding four agencies and districts has been blocked by security forces, and artillery and armor have moved to the Khyber and Kurram borders with Orakzai. This coupled with the repositioning of artillery and armor assets in Kurram and Khyber suggests additional operations are imminent against TTP insurgents in western Orakzai or Tariq Afridi militants in the Darra Adam Khel region of NWFP.

INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION

ISLAMABAD 00000175 002 OF 002

¶6. (U) On December 31, 2009, USAID signed and Implementation Letter (IL) with the FATA Secretariat for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of water, road and energy infrastructure in South Waziristan. USAID will reimburse the FATA Secretariat for work completed according to pre-agreed costs and specifications. The GOP is currently preparing the specifications and cost estimates for the projects, with an initial emphasis on a major road between Tank and Makeen. Once the design and cost estimate has been completed and approved, USAID will advance the FATA Secretariat 15 percent of the cost to cover mobilization expenses, with additional funding to be disbursed after the work is completed. The FATA Secretariat is contracting the Frontier Works Organization (FWO) to implement the road projects. In a January 14 meeting with USAID, FWO confirmed that it had mobilized a team in South Waziristan to complete the design and cost estimates.

ASSISTANCE TO ORAKZAI AND SWA DISPLACED

¶7. (SBU) Humanitarian assistance - food and non-food items (NFI) - is reaching both the approximately 12,000 families displaced from Orakzai and the approximately 38,000 families displaced from South Waziristan. Of the Orakzai displaced, the 8,000 families in Kohat have received NFI through UNHCR, and the rest, who are in Hangu, are supported by ICRC. Only a very few -- perhaps one hundred families -- are in a camp. While the Orakzai displaced do not receive cash payments from the Government of Pakistan, they are supported with food from the World Food Program (WFP).

¶8. (C) Those registered displaced (members of the Mehsud tribe) from South Waziristan are primarily in DI Khan and Tank where they have received ample non-food items from UNHCR. They receive a one-month food distribution from WFP upon registration and then are entitled to government payments of PKR 5,000 (about \$60) a month. Those who do not yet have activated government cash cards continue to receive WFP food.

¶9. (C) For military and strategic purposes, the GOP does not recognize members of the neighboring Bhittani tribe as

conflict-displaced IDPs and hence has not designated them as eligible for government payments. Recently, however, UNHCR was pleased to be able to win government permission to register the Bhittani displaced unofficially and to see that they receive humanitarian assistance. A total of some 2,000 Bhittani families are being registered in DI Khan and Tank, and when this registration is completed in the next few days, this group will benefit from NFI and food distributions.

¶10. (SBU) Even prior to the security forces' blocking of access to Orakzai Agency, humanitarian actors have not been able to provide assistance within Orakzai or South Waziristan. Humanitarian organizations have begun planning, however, for possible assistance upon the eventual return of IDPs to areas of displacement. They have received some indications from the military to expect the beginning of this return in March.

¶11. (S/NF) Comment: As we have previously noted, the Army's South Waziristan campaign has significantly eroded the TTP's command and control, but has not destroyed the TTP network, whose fighters melted away in South Waziristan or fled to other FATA agencies, rather than put up stiff resistance. The Army still faces a long road ahead in rooting out the TTP in South Waziristan and pursuing TTP elements elsewhere in the FATA.

PATTERSON